**Irregular adjectives and the position of adjectives in general**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Meaning** | **Masculine singular** | **Feminine singular** | **Masculine plural** | **Feminine plural** |
| white | blanc | blanche | blancs | blancs |
| good | bon | bonne | bons | bonnes |
| dear | cher | chère | chers | chères |
| false | faux | fausse | faux | fausses |
| cool, fresh | frais | fraîche | frais | fraîches |
| mad | fou (fol) | folle | fous | folles |
| kind | gentil | gentille | gentils | gentilles |
| happy | heureux | heureuse | heureux | heureuses |
| long | long | longue | longs | longues |
| brand new | neuf | neuve | neufs | neuves |
| new | nouveau (nouvel) | nouvelle | nouveaux | nouvelles |
| similar | pareil | pareille | pareils | pareilles |
| red haired | roux | rousse | roux | rousses |
| dry | sec | sèche | secs | sèches |
| old | vieux (vieil) | vieille | vieux | vieilles |

**Note 1.**  A small group of adjectives have a special masculine singular form before a **vowel** or silent **h**:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Meaning** | **Masculine singular before consonant** | **Masculine singular before vowel** | **Feminine singular** | **Meaning and example** |
| beautiful | beau | bel | belle | le bel homme - the handsome man |
| mad/crazy | fou | fol | folle | le fol espoir - the mad hope |
| new | nouveau | nouvel | nouvelle | le nouvel an - the new year |
| old | vieux | vieil | vieille | le vieil hôtel - the old hotel |

**Note 2.** A few adjectives are **invariable** which means they do not change in the feminine and plural. All compound adjectives of colour are invariable:

Bleu **marine** Navy blue

Marron Brown

Une robe **rouge foncé**  A dark red dress

Des yeux **bleu clair** Light blue eyes

Des cheveux **brun foncé** Dark brown hair

Orange Orange

Elle porte des gants **orange**  She is wearing orange gloves

Elle portait des chaussures **rouge vif** She was wearing bright red shoes

Also: **chic, cool, super** are also invariable and are modern anglicisms. The rules vary for other compound adjectives so it is best to look in a good dictionary to check them.

**Position of Adjectives**

Most adjectives in French follow the noun, but the adjectives in the list below normally stand **before** the noun in French:

beau beautiful

bon good

grand great/big

gros big/fat

haut high

jeune young

joli pretty

mauvais bad

meilleur better

moindre less/least

petit small

vaste immense

vieux old

**Note 1**. Interestingly the two adjectives **court** and **long** meaning short and long often precede the noun unless there is a contrast of short as opposed to long

une longue liste

but une robe longue (as opposed to a short dress)

des cheveux courts

des cheveux longs

Note 2. You may have noticed that the adjectives **dernier** and **prochain** vary their position. This is because when these words follow a word indicating a specific time **l’année dernière**, **la semaine prochaine.** In other places they precede the noun: **la prochaine fois**.

Examples:

Elle veut poursuivre de hautes études. She wants to pursue higher education.

Elle portait une très jolie robe. She was wearing a very pretty dress.

Une jeune homme est entré dans le bureau. A young man entered the office**.**

**Adjectives which change meaning according to their position**

Some adjectives have a different meaning depending on whether they are placed **before** or **after** the noun. Some of the more common adjectives that do this are listed below*,* but there are too many to mention here. If unsure consult a good dictionary.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Adjective** | **Meaning before noun** | **Meaning after noun** |
| ancien  brave  cher  nouveau  pauvre  propre | former  decent  dear, beloved  new  pitiful, or poor quality  own | old  brave  expensive  new (newly created)  poor, (impoverished)  clean |

Examples:

Dans une maison **ancienne** les murs sont épais. In an old house the walls are thick.

L'**ancien** ministre de l'éducation est arrivé. The former minister of education arrived.

j’ai acheté une **nouvelle** voiture. I bought a new car (ie different)

Un vin **nouveau.** A new wine

Chacun des ses enfants a sa **propre** chambre. Each of her children has his own room.

Elle veut garder sa chambre **propre** et bien rangée. She wants to keep her room clean and tidy.

**Note.** In French a noun may be preceded or followed by two or even more adjectives.

In these cases they are linked by**et** or **ou:**

Une **belle** et **vieille** voiture. A beautiful old car.

Marie est une **jeune** fille **intelligente** et **résolue**. Marie is a young intelligent and determined girl.

**Exercise** Irregular adjectives (beau – beautiful; nouveau – new; vieux - old)

1. J’adore le \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ arbre (old)

2. Je vais visiter quelques \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ batiments traditionnels (beautiful)

3. Julie a de \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ amis (new)

4. Dans le jardin il y a un \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ abri (old)

5. Je me sers souvent de mon \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ livre de français. (old)

6. Jeanne a de \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ voisins (new)

7. C'était un \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hôtel, et j'adore les \_\_\_\_\_\_hôtels (old, old)

8.J’habite dans une \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ville. (beautiful)

9. Ce sont de \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ chaussures. (new)

10. Ce sont de \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ maisons. (old)